

Media, PA – One of the main areas in which Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) has focused his efforts to stimulate the local economy is workforce development, particularly in the fields that require training in artisan skills. Today the Congressman made two major announcements about the results of his focus on this topic. He presented a \$187,000 check to the Delaware County Chamber Foundation for a job readiness program that will be geared toward providing more technical training opportunities, and revealed a new initiative that brings together local superintendents with employers of artisan skilled-workers to establish better training for careers in need of more qualified employees. — “The key to strengthening our current financial climate is starting with partnerships between businesses and education institutions” said Congressman Sestak. “These funds and this new program involving superintendents will help prepare our youth for important, well-paid jobs.”

The funding, which the Congressman advocated for and won through the federal appropriations process, and the new partnership complement the Workforce Development Summit that the Congressman hosted in June. Congressman Sestak has also established a Higher Education Workforce Development Advisory Committee of local leaders to address the same concerns voiced at the summit, including how to better prepare students to meet the needs of local businesses and ways to address the lack of participation in training programs for artisan skills. The committee’s work has lead to the initiative that will partner our schools with local companies to introduce students to high-value manufacturing fields and establish a relationship between the businesses and the community.

“With our country’s economy struggling, it is becoming more and more imperative that students not only receive access to a post-secondary education, whether it is at a four-year college, a two-year institution or a trade school, but also obtain the needed preparation in secondary schools,” said Congressman Sestak. “It is the government’s responsibility to provide these opportunities to help ensure their job security and our nation’s financial security.”

Congressman Sestak has worked hard in Washington to pass legislation that increases access to educational opportunities. Recently, the Congressman supported the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, which was signed into law in February, and would help students and families plan financially for education by requiring that colleges provide information about the anticipated cost of a post-secondary degree. In addition, the act increases aid available through Pell Grants and includes an amendment introduced by the Congressman to make transferring easier.

As Vice-Chairman of the Small Business Committee, the Congressman has worked hard to reverse troubling economic trends in his District by also focusing on the climate for local small businesses, which produce more than 70 percent of American jobs. Since 2001, Delaware County has lost 762 small businesses and 22 percent of its manufacturing. In addition, the real median income level in the Congressman’s District dropped \$300 between 2001 and 2006, while costs of health care and education have skyrocketed, 70 percent and 59 percent

respectively.

To work on these issues, the Congressman has held five economic development summits. December's Business Procurement attracted more than 400 small businessmen and women, bringing them together with more than 40 large businesses and more than 15 federal and state government contractors to increase opportunities for small businesses, which receive only 6.7 percent of federal contracts in the District, as opposed to the federally mandated 23 percent.

Other summits held by the Congressman include:

- An Economic Summit at Widener University to discuss economic development strategies and revitalization.
- An Economic Growth and Resources Summit at Delaware County Community College to connect local businesses with federal, state and local resources.
- A summit on Challenges Facing Working Women and Women Small Business Owners, attended by Home Small Business Committee Chairwoman Nydia Velazquez.

The Congressman has strongly supported additional legislation in Washington to improve the economic climate in the nation, and specifically in the District:

- Originated amendments requiring the Department of Defense – prior to awarding contracts worth more than \$5 million – to conduct market research on the ability of small businesses to do the work; and stopping the government from unfairly “bundling” small contracts into “mega-contracts,” a practice that makes it harder for small business to compete.
- The Small Business Investment Expansion Act to reform the Small Business Administration to help struggling businesses obtain the capital necessary to start or grow their operations. It also improves access to venture capital and “angel investments,” to spur innovation and ensure our nation’s global competitiveness.
- The Small Business Regulatory Improvement Act to require rules affecting small business to take into account any direct or indirect effects on those businesses before the rule goes into effect.

- The SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act, supporting and expanding small business development center programs.
- The Federal Housing Finance Reform Act, which takes measures to address the current housing crisis, preserving and promoting home ownership, a key part of economic development.
- Voted for the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act of 2008 to extend tax credits that support alternative energy, including solar energy and wind power, and also create jobs. In 2006, such efforts generated 8.5 million jobs and nearly \$970 billion in revenue.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.*